

JOINT **L**EGISLATIVE **A**UDIT AND **R**EVUE **C**OMMITTEE

NEWS

Special Edition

December 1997

A Productive and Successful Year

JLARC Work Leads to Significant Cost Savings and Program Improvements

During the past year, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) sponsored legislation, published several reports that aided in legislative decision-making, and saw the fruition of work leading to significant cost savings and/or program improvements. Consistent with the committee's strategic plan, JLARC continued to pursue effectively meeting its performance objectives, which are highlighted below.



Impacts

Ensure work is responsive and useful and recommendations are substantive

JLARC Reports Used by Legislature During '97 Session

- Policy and capital funding decisions based on JLARC's performance audit of the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration resulted in recommended savings estimated at \$7 million per biennium.
- Aided by JLARC's school bus study, the legislature's decision to retain previously enacted changes in the state's funding and bidding policy is resulting in savings estimated at \$4 million annually.
- Legislation initiated by JLARC studies of the Forest Board Trust Lands and Jobs Opportunities and Basic Skills Training Program (JOBS) was enacted which strengthened state government accountability in personal services contracting and in analyzing program outcomes.

- JLARC's review of Child Protective Services provides a tool for better allocating agency resources, and has been instrumental in evaluating program performance.

Previous Work Now Reaping Benefits

- The National Conference of State Legislatures presented JLARC with a 1997 Impact Award in recognition of the committee's 1992 performance audit of the State Investment Board (SIB), in which the state has reaped significant benefits, including a \$140 million settlement payment to the SIB by a real estate investment management firm.
- Based on JLARC recommendations, a new organizational structure and additional internal controls on the authorization of staff travel were instituted by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- As part of the Governor's Capital Budget instructions, state agencies are now using a JLARC-developed model as a basis for analyzing lease vs. ownership alternatives for facilities.



Accountability

Increase accountability to the legislature (and the public)

JLARC's Enhanced Role in Legislative Oversight

- Legislation enacted in the '97 session includes major new mandates doubling JLARC's workload. Included are projects such as performance audits of transportation agencies; an evaluation of the WorkFirst Program (welfare reform); and a performance audit of the Workers' Compensation Program.
- JLARC's 1997-99 Biennium Work Plan was developed with input from legislative leadership, ranking minority members, and staff of the House and Senate standing fiscal committees.
- In collaboration with the Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program and the Legislative Transportation Committee, JLARC staff developed and distributed the "Legislative Guide to the Bottom Line: Performance-Based Government." The Guide is a resource designed to aid legislators in their review of agencies' strategic plans, performance measures, and budgets.
- JLARC's performance measures have been incorporated into the 1997-99 Biennium Budget and posted on the Internet.



Communications

Improve communication with, and usefulness to, legislature

Efforts Aimed at Improving Communication

- JLARC surveyed members of the 1996 Legislature and key legislative staff as a means of identifying ways in which JLARC could improve its communications with, and usefulness to, the legislature. This process resulted in new audit topics and a prototype for streamlined reports.

- Four project advisory groups involving legislators, legislative staff, and other public officials, and stakeholders were established.
- Eight presentations on JLARC's role in state government were made to party caucuses, at member orientations, or for other legislative committees.
- Four JLARC newsletters have been published, distributed, and posted to JLARC's Home Page on the Internet.
- Seven press releases on JLARC studies and/or accomplishments were issued.



Committee

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